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UNICEF PROGRAMMES FOR THE URBAN POOR

SUMMARY

The urban poor number 600 million, over 40 per cent of the total urban population in developing countries. The vulnerability of their children has been exacerbated in the past decade by urbanization amid economic and environmental crises and recurring conflicts. Disaggregated data are scarce, but where available they indicate that urban children fare worse than the national average and often worse than their rural counterparts.

The most creative responses for coping with this situation have come from the urban poor themselves. UNICEF, through its urban basic services (UBS) strategy, has joined a number of Governments and non-governmental organizations in supporting the kind of empowerment strategy that the multi-donor evaluation has proposed be used more often. However, this strategy has not been applied vigorously or consistently and has suffered from the lack of analysis regarding impact and costing. The new opportunities presented by the heightened global concern for the child and the environment, as well as by positive trends towards decentralization and democratization, make a realignment of UBS timely and necessary.

UNICEF plans a two-pronged approach comprising an urban focus in various sectoral programmes and a revitalized UBS strategy, with four main thrusts: achievement of the decade goals for children, along with partnerships for poverty reduction; action on primary environmental care; attention to children in especially difficult circumstances; and application of the concept of "urban development with a human face".

The Executive Director urges all countries to address the needs of poor urban children through their national programmes of action and through follow-up to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Agenda 21, along the lines described above. He further recommends that UNICEF support developing countries in

their efforts to do so through country programmes, situation analyses, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation.

Chapter VII of this document contains the full recommendation for Board review and approval.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present paper reviews current UNICEF urban policy and strategies, as well as developments since these strategies were initially approved by the Executive Board in 1982 (E/ICEF/695). It also makes appropriate recommendations for the future.

I. URBAN TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN OF THE URBAN POOR

A. Demographic, ecological, economic and political trends

2. Nearly 1.5 billion persons, over one third of the developing world's population, live in urban areas today. By the year 2000, two fifths, or 2 billion persons, will be urban dwellers. Over the past decade, urban populations have grown at a rate of 4.5 per cent, while rural populations have grown by only 1 per cent. This trend is expected to continue for at least three decades, despite the fact that both rates are slowing somewhat. In effect, the developing world's urban population will double its 1980 level by the year 2000, and triple it by the year 2010, if the predicted 3 per cent growth in the next decade occurs. The urbanization rate varies among regions: Africa and Asia, whose populations are less than one third urban, have urbanization rates of 5 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively; Latin America, whose population is almost three quarters urban, has an urbanization rate of 3 per cent. 1/

3. There is phenomenal global diversity, with urban centres ranging from mega-cities (with at least 8 million inhabitants) to small towns of only a few thousand inhabitants. During the 1950-1980 period, the 165 cities in developing countries that had a population of over 1 million had a high average annual growth - between 3 and 6 per cent. 2/ In the last decade, natural increase has been an increasingly important factor, accounting for over one half of the growth of many cities, while the remaining growth has been due to immigration, incorporation of villages into urban municipalities and the changing definition of areas from rural to urban as they attain a certain size. Some reverse migration occurred after structural adjustment programmes were introduced, but this has not diminished overall urban growth. 3/

4. These broad aggregates and long-term trends hide many important features of urbanization that are of concern to UNICEF, especially since nearly one half of the urban population are children. Urban growth continues to be fuelled by the pull of city jobs and amenities and the push of stagnant rural economies. At the same time, armed conflict, drought, famine and environmental degradation in the countryside are driving people into cities at an increasing rate, especially in Africa. Many health problems, including respiratory infections, gastro-intestinal disorders, birth defects and skin diseases, are caused mainly by poor housing, unsafe water supply, inadequate sanitation or air and noise pollution. Inadequate standards and technologies in developing countries compound the problem, affecting all residents; but the poor, due to the location of their housing in undesirable areas, suffer more. 4/

5. The main burden of poverty is being borne increasingly by urban areas. In 1980, there were twice as many poor rural households (80 million) as poor urban

ones (40 million). But by the year 2000, more than one half of the absolute poor will be concentrated in urban centres, according to current estimates (72 million households in urban areas as against 56 million in rural areas). 5/ Nearly all cities have some slums and pockets of poverty, and many developing country cities are overwhelmingly poor, with only a few prosperous areas.

6. Such structural problems as unemployment, underemployment and low wages, which have long assailed the urban poor, were exacerbated in the 1980s due to economic crises, especially in Africa and Latin America. The structural adjustment programmes adopted by most countries removed subsidies and price controls (which had previously helped the urban poor) and reduced employment opportunities in the largely urban government and parastatal sectors. Reduced public spending, particularly in the social sectors, as well as cutbacks in public and industrial investment, drastically lessened economic opportunities in urban areas. The brunt of adjustment has been borne by the urban poor, who were already suffering and therefore more vulnerable to crisis. One of the main outlets for these conflicting pressures has been the continued growth of the urban informal sector.

7. Women are entering the paid workforce in ever-increasing numbers, but generally in low-paid, informal jobs, while male unemployment has been increasing. The high proportion of households headed by a single parent, usually the mother, both among the rural and urban poor, is due to many factors - separation of work from home, the breakdown of family structures, dislocation and family separation caused by natural and man-made disasters or search for employment. Households headed by women are far more likely to be poor. 6/ Children in single-parent families are more prone to be malnourished and to drop out of school early; they are also more likely to be exploited at work and to become street children. 7/

8. The end of the cold war has seen a reduction in ideological conflict, but an increase in ethnic and religious strife, contributing to large-scale flight to the relative safety of urban areas. On the positive side, the widespread resurgence of democratization has been accompanied in many places by decentralization and popular participation in public policy. Increased autonomy, power and importance have been assigned to local Governments in many countries. However, this has often not been accompanied by the necessary financial power and skills, nor by the political will to address the needs of the urban poor.

B. Impact on children and their families

9. Although urban areas are considered more favoured than rural areas with regard to social services and quality of life, the realities and problems of poor urban children and their families are masked by the lack of disaggregated data within urban centres. The following table shows that the infant mortality rate (IMR) is higher in slums than in the rest of the city. It is often higher than the national rate and sometimes even the rural rate. 8/ Similar contrasts occur for the incidence of morbidity and disease. This is especially the case with regard to such environment-related diseases as diarrhoea, tuberculosis and ascaris, which are more prevalent in congested urban areas with poor housing and

IMR in low-income vs. other areas

(Per 1,000 live births)

Location	Year	National	Low-income urban areas	Other urban areas	Rural areas
Dhaka, Bangladesh	1991	116	142	68	93
Guatemala City, Guatemala	1989	54	50	48	
Karachi, Pakistan	1985	120	95-152	32	
Managua, Nicaragua	1987	56	60	50	60
Port-au-Prince, Haiti	1983	110	200		66
Porto Alegre, Brazil	1985	70	75.5	25	
Sao Paulo, Brazil	(circa 1983)	80	175	42	

Source: See note 8. (Data not available for all areas.)

sanitation. In a survey of 35 countries, average access to safe water was 64 per cent in marginal urban areas and 67 per cent in rural areas. 9/ Even these figures do not reveal the true extent of intra-urban inequities: the poor pay 3 to 10 times more than other urban dwellers (whose consumption is subsidized by low rates) and spend up to 40 per cent of their earnings on water. Urban malnutrition is a widespread problem. In one study, energy intake in slums was only one half or two thirds of what it was in other areas; another study found that up to 50 per cent of children in slum areas were malnourished, 10 per cent severely, and the incidence of anaemia was twice as high in slums as elsewhere. 10/ Budget cuts in social services have affected both the urban and rural poor, and as these are the groups whose children are most at risk for survival, development and protection, their situation has continued to deteriorate.

10. Poverty and the breakdown in family structures continue to produce more working children and street children as well as more child abuse and abandonment. Hidden and unrecognized forms of child labour (through exploitative forms of work in the domestic/informal service sector), as well as child prostitution, have been increasing in many countries. In some countries, street children have been attacked or killed by vigilantes and gangs. While the increasing violence against women and children is not solely an urban phenomenon, the disintegration of families and communities, the deterioration of social values and the effects of tension and rivalries are exacerbated in a rapidly urbanizing area and tend to increase greatly the frequency of violence in urban life, both in the home and on the streets.

II. RESPONSES TO RECENT URBAN TRENDS

A. Responses of the urban poor

11. Those who are the victims of adverse socio-economic trends have been very enterprising and creative in the ways they respond to them. The growth in the urban informal sector in housing and infrastructure development, manufacturing, commerce, transport, social services and appropriate technology is the result of the contributions of people, sometimes assisted by, but sometimes in spite of, actions by Government, municipalities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and international agencies. Such community organizations as the barangay (small municipality) development committees in the Philippines and the communal kitchens in Peru and Mexico, targeting at-risk families, especially mothers and children, are only two examples of community-managed initiatives. 11/

B. National responses

12. Developing country Governments have worked with international agencies to mitigate poverty and the social impact of the structural adjustment process. However, these mechanisms have generally been short-term solutions that circumvent existing service structures rather than reform them, and they are not always targeted towards those most in need. As Governments find social services and infrastructure increasingly difficult to provide, owing to the combination of resource constraints and population growth, NGOs have moved to fill the vacuum through creative partnerships with urban communities. Some Governments, along with international agencies, the private sector, religious groups, professional organizations, labour unions and, in some cases, universities, have supported such ventures.

13. Most Governments face a real dilemma. In providing necessary urban services, they risk encouraging more migration. One major response, despite the uncertain record of such measures in previous decades, is to stem the tide of rural-urban migration, or at least migration to the largest cities, by rural development programmes or measures intended to attract people to smaller urban centres ("growth poles"). Another response, less common than in previous decades, is slum removal through clearance and relocation to the urban periphery. However, slum clearance has rarely succeeded because the poor return, out of sheer necessity for survival, to slum areas, their only link to limited employment opportunities. On the other hand, some Governments have legalized unauthorized settlements through negotiations or land-sharing schemes between the squatters and landlords (as, for example, in Bangkok, Thailand, and Tegucigalpa, Honduras) and provided basic urban services.

14. In several of the more economically advanced developing countries, urban development policies have themselves perpetuated urban poverty and further undermined the capacities of the urban poor. Urban redevelopment concerned primarily with the quality of buildings and the rate of return on urban land and infrastructure have directly or indirectly led to the large-scale dislocation of poor urban communities.

15. Service providers rarely take into account the actual barriers and opportunity costs that prevent the urban poor from using services that are available in cities. Additionally, there is a grey area as far as slums, shanty towns and camps for the displaced are concerned. They are often not included in the jurisdiction of the municipality, are not part of the rural district around the city and are forgotten both in service provision and statistics. When the displaced are regarded as temporary refugees, services may not be allotted to them at all.

III. UNICEF URBAN THRUSTS IN THE 1980s

A. The 1982 Executive Board recommendation and the UNICEF response

16. The urban basic services (UBS) strategy is the result of the evolution of UNICEF experience in urban programmes of the 1970s. The Executive Board reviewed UNICEF progress in 1982 and directed the organization to expand its support for urban programmes, based on country-specific needs, endorsing the community-based approach. The Board stressed the need for programme convergence and for advocacy and support for these approaches to be incorporated in government social planning as well as in physical development projects.

17. Over the last decade, UNICEF assistance to children and women in urban areas focused on support for national, centrally designed and sectoral services in urban areas; support for subnational, participatory and intersectoral UBS programmes; greatly expanded efforts in favour of working children and street children; country-specific studies and assessments; and advocacy for macroeconomic issues affecting the urban poor, for example, "adjustment with a human face". In the early 1990s, the Mayors as Defenders of Children Initiative called upon mayors to pursue the decade goals for their own cities by assessing the situation of children, formulating subnational plans of action and supporting community as well as sectoral initiatives.

18. By 1982, when the report entitled "Urban basic services, reaching children and women of urban poor" (E/ICEF/1982/L.1440 and Add.1 and Corr.1) was presented to the Executive Board, UNICEF had UBS programmes in 43 countries, and 24 additional countries expressed interest in developing similar programmes. In subsequent years, the number of UBS programmes and the number of UNICEF staff specializing in the urban field remained about the same. Nevertheless, UBS programmes in a few countries, such as India, Indonesia and Mexico, continued to expand, while some new ones appeared in Ethiopia, Guatemala and the Philippines. Allowing for possible differences of interpretation among countries, it appears that overall in recent years urban areas have been receiving about 20 per cent of UNICEF assistance, e.g., in terms of health sector, family-based and community-based services. Urban water supply and sanitation received less than 5 per cent of overall expenditures, largely due to the high-cost urban technologies typically adopted, which UNICEF did not support. In 1990 and 1991, about 2 per cent of all programme resources were spent on children in especially difficult circumstances. By 1991, 27 countries had UNICEF-assisted programmes for street children, although only one third were outside of Latin America.

B. Urban basic services: experiences and strengths

19. The rationale for the urban focus of UNICEF has always been that the urban poor are among the most vulnerable, while at the same time they are highly resourceful and resilient and contribute significantly to urban and national development. Given some support, they can improve dramatically their situation and that of their children. Due to the peculiar urban conditions of density, cash economy, high proportion of female-headed households and lack of traditional community and extended family ties, appropriate mechanisms have to be devised for bringing development to the urban poor. Also, many poor families (urban as well as rural) have a number of child survival, development and protection problems. These various aspects of the problem faced by the urban poor called for convergent basic services, combined with strong community participation and family capacity-building. Thus, a dual approach was adopted to bring direct services to the poor and to provide indirect services through training of government officials and service providers and advocating policy changes designed to help the urban poor.

20. UBS is more than the sum of its parts. Its mutually reinforcing sectoral interventions are driven by objectives that include community empowerment through participation, organization, training and access to local government services; universal coverage of all target groups by sectoral services; institutional linkages of trained community volunteers with paraprofessionals to assure support for community services; intersectoral coordination of planning and service provision at the local level and policy coordination at the national level; incorporation of urban poor community needs into government policies and programmes; use of low-cost technologies to ensure their continued use under local management; capacity-building for communities, local government and national agencies to support services and community development in poor urban areas; sustainability that flows from the realization of the above objectives, especially empowerment, low-cost technologies and capacity-building; institutionalization and "going-to-scale" through training, supporting community development and intersectoral coordination structures in local government; and influencing national laws and policies that benefit the urban poor. No single project can claim to have incorporated all these aspects, but there are many examples of the success achieved when several elements are combined in one project.

21. Different patterns of linkages between sectoral goals and the UBS approach have emerged over time. In several countries, the UBS programme has embraced sectoral interventions and thus enabled a sharper focus on measurable goals. India's UBS programme provided the necessary social infrastructure and community involvement to facilitate other programmes. One example of this was the 1989 cholera epidemic in Delhi, when UBS volunteers supported by health workers managed to keep the death toll to 1 out of 20,000 slum dwellers, while the city as a whole had 1,300 deaths. Lima, Peru, had a similar experience in the 1991 cholera epidemic.

22. Moreover, in several countries, sectoral programmes were an "entry point" for participatory development and service convergence. For example, in Tegucigalpa, using a water supply and sanitation project as a starting-point, the community trained health volunteers to run popular pharmacies and community child-care services and is now planning ways to improve sanitation. 12/

Interventions that focused on such specific target activities as women's income generation and the rehabilitation of street children and working children, tended to link up with existing UBS programmes in the same area, sooner or later, but seldom created an entry point for a full range of services at the community level. Both these types of responses are found in the cases studied in "The urban child in distress", a research project of the International Child Development Centre. The study examined urban slum families as well as street children and working children in 20 cities of various sizes in Brazil, India, Italy, Kenya and the Philippines and analysed both rehabilitative support to such children and preventive approaches and basic services targeting high-risk families. The studies stimulated country-level policy discussions based on promising municipal-level programmes for urban children in especially difficult circumstances.

23. Sometimes, however, the linkages were poor. For example, national universal child immunization (UCI) efforts did not use the UBS structures in India and the Philippines until the end of the decade, when special efforts had to be made in order to achieve the targets. In both cases, the universal coverage in UBS provided useful lessons regarding community involvement and led to course corrections in non-UBS areas. Campaigns and other specific sectoral interventions such as UCI and oral rehydration therapy generally reached their targets in urban areas, but only in a few cases served as entry points for the expansion and/or upgrading of urban health services, as, for example, in Turkey and in some towns in the Philippines.

24. Several examples exist of multisectoral UBS projects. Often these projects start from one entry point, as in the case of Tegucigalpa (see para. 22 above). The Olongapo (Philippine) project is a good illustration of UBS stimulating active involvement of the community in identifying needs and priorities and promoting intersectoral coordination. The project has achieved success in community-based health, skills training, credit mechanisms, rehabilitation of street children, community monitoring systems and barangay committees. A project in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico, also had multisectoral and community empowerment objectives from the start. Some key achievements include the community-based monitoring of young children's growth and health; the provision of health services to small children and mothers; and pre-school and primary education opportunities. 13/ In some countries, the UBS strategy has been introduced following multisectoral settlement improvement programmes, such as in Indonesia's kampung (urban, usually low-income, settlement or village) improvement programme. UNICEF worked to enhance community empowerment and child-focused activities in development projects that otherwise emphasized physical infrastructure.

25. Successful UBS projects have expanded in Indonesia and the Philippines and have attracted funds (in Hyderabad, India, 13 times the initial amount provided by UNICEF and the Government). They have also spawned other projects and have been instrumental in national acceptance of the overall concept. Since the 1970s, UBS in India has spread from three initial towns to 168 towns and has been incorporated in the national development plan. The Philippines urban pro-poor programme is also patterned on the UBS approach.

26. Even when constraints regarding institutionalization of successful local experience (such as in the case of Guayaquil, Ecuador, between 1981 and 1985)

prevented UNICEF-assisted efforts from going to scale, the possible benefits of community empowerment and capacity-building remain. 14/

C. Constraints

27. In many cases, the need to build community confidence has led UBS programmes to focus on the process of community development rather than on the impact on children and women. The interplay between impact and process has not always been understood or managed creatively. Also, as community empowerment and capacity-building are key strategies in UBS, the approach takes time for major impacts to be felt. Demands on UNICEF and other staff are also initially high and could be a limiting factor in expansion.

28. As UBS works primarily at the community level, it sometimes does not link up with national sectoral programmes. On the other hand, such national programmes do not easily connect with community-based programmes. Working on a multisectoral programme with multiple partners in the Government and outside is inherently difficult. Effecting such linkages remains a key challenge.

29. The absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures has resulted in mainly anecdotal evidence of the gains and shortcomings of projects, and of the approach itself. Community-based baseline surveys have been invaluable for community empowerment and action. However, little attention has been paid to determining the cost of such interventions, particularly community contributions. The multiplier effects of community cost-sharing/recovery schemes and community ability and willingness to contribute need to be explored. These are obviously not easy exercises in a multisectoral, community-based programme, but appropriate methods must be worked out.

30. The fact that most UBS projects are initially small in scale facilicates community mobilization and local situation analysis which, in turn, helps to establish operational methods and fine-tune strategies. There is a need to move from small to large scale with greater speed. Yet, as the process is community-based, this cannot be ensured by a directive but has to be nurtured during the initial phases in each location (community or urban area). Capacity-building of local and national agencies, both governmental and NGO, has helped, as past examples have shown, but these need to be included in overall planning. At the same time, it is necessary to be aware of the pitfalls in rapid expansion, as the quality of the programme, and even its essential features (community empowerment, convergence and locally managed approaches), may suffer in the process.

IV. NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR A SHARPER FOCUS ON THE URBAN POOR

31. The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s saw a number of key developments that augur well for all children, particularly poor urban children, despite the evident problems that have been discussed previously in chapter I. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides the broad umbrella for this positive environment. Not only does the Convention automatically cover all children, but article 2 explicitly demands that disparities among children be eliminated. Several other articles, in referring to children in especially

difficult circumstances, imply that the poor urban child needs special attention. The 1990 World Summit for Children similarly targets disparity reduction, and thus requires that the poor urban child be included in programmes that are part of national programmes of action (NPAs). The goals set by the World Summit, and adopted in the various NPAs, clearly cannot be achieved unless poor urban children, as well as poor rural children, are targeted. Steps to formulate and implement subnational plans of action have already been taken by some Governments, including those of Colombia and Mexico, which have city plans of action, and India, which in its NPA has noted the problems caused by rapid urbanization and has listed its UBS programme as a vehicle for achieving the plan's objectives in the areas of health, nutrition and women in development. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women stresses the fulfilment of women's strategic and practical needs. Together, the two Conventions and the World Summit Declaration represent a major opportunity to invoke the moral duty of the world to strive for the well-being of all children as never before. Emphasizing the rights of, and goals for, all children requires a specific focus on poor urban children.

32. Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), calls upon Governments "to promote primary environmental care [PEC] activities that address the basic needs of communities, improve the environment for children at the household and community level and encourage the participation and empowerment of local populations ... towards the objective of integrated community management of resources, especially in developing countries". Clearly, the PEC concept applied to urban areas has many similarities to the UBS strategy. Agenda 21 also includes an explicit focus on "meeting the urban health challenge", stressing coordinated action, through municipal and local health plans, "enabling strategies" and documentation of intra-urban differences. Improvement of urban management and provision of an integrated environmental infrastructure are stressed. UNICEF can respond to the call of Agenda 21 and cooperate with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development by helping to put the concept of PEC to work for children in low-income urban areas. New partnerships and a new environmental perspective can help to revitalize the UBS strategy in this decade.

33. The political climate in the post-cold war era is itself a dynamic force in favour of decentralization and empowerment of the common people. The concept of the "civil society" and recognition of its role and that of NGOs create new possibilities for action by and for the urban poor. With the growing trend towards privatization, the private sector can be challenged to share in the social as well as economic solutions to urban problems. The Mayors as Defenders of Children Initiative is based on the premise that municipal governments have the moral and institutional duty to respond to the needs of their citizens and to promote the survival, protection and development of children. An International Colloquium of Mayors was held in Dakar, Senegal, in January 1992 at which mayors from across the globe committed themselves to specific actions for children; a second colloquium is scheduled for July 1993, when more mayors are expected to take up the initiative.

34. Several major international agencies have raised their level of concern, and often funding, for the urban poor in recent years. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) annual reports on human development and the 1990 World Bank report, as well as its Social Dimensions of Adjustment projects, have

focused on poverty, human resources, decentralization and empowerment. 15/ The World Bank's new urban policy combines the economic management of poverty with its social management, through basic social services and better access to infrastructure and housing. 16/ The UNDP urban strategy for the 1990s calls for a programme approach to urban development which will coordinate multisectoral activities, promote women's participation and help to generate jobs and skills for the disadvantaged. 17/ The World Health Organization (WHO) has been promoting urban primary health care (PHC) and a "healthy cities" project for some years now and has co-sponsored urban PHC meetings with UNICEF. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) has developed a strategy that seeks to help the urban poor meet their own shelter needs through credit, organization and technical assistance.

35. Such concerns, if channelled properly, should help programmes that benefit the poor urban child go to scale. It is worth noting that some of these agencies, such as the World Bank and UNDP, have voiced their appreciation of the UNICEF UBS approach and achievements and have also indicated their interest in working with UNICEF to expand and sustain this approach. The recent emphasis on increased teamwork within the United Nations system will strengthen already existing attempts and generate new ones.

V. RATIONALE FOR REVISING UNICEF URBAN POLICY

36. A review of UNICEF efforts over the past decade on behalf of the urban child, in the light of the new development climate, indicates new directions for the future. The urban poor demand attention both in their own right, and as a critical group in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and attainment of the decade goals for children. Disparity reduction is an essential element in both, and no disparity is more glaring than that between children of the urban poor and those of other urban dwellers. Poverty reduction through the provision of minimum flow of basic services to the urban poor is therefore a major and necessary step. UNICEF has a unique opportunity to promote balanced national and international policies that support both rural and urban poor, taking advantage of, and building on, the climate of decentralization and democratization, the increasing support for active children's and environmental movements and the new policies of many key international development agencies.

37. As shown by the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, it is difficult to achieve the proper balance between large-scale programme delivery, capacity-building and empowerment. The UNICEF experience with UBS programmes shows that going to scale with programmes based on a community empowerment strategy is possible but complex. The two-pronged strategy proposed below aims at an optimum mix of these elements through sectoral programmes serving entire urban areas and specific programmes or interventions targeting the urban poor. The UBS approach has special strengths that should be built upon: improved service delivery, community empowerment, capacity-building, multisectoral coordination and low-cost local solutions. To support this approach, the following are needed: more measurable objectives; better baseline data; monitoring and evaluation systems; effective cost analysis; and greater attention to sustainability and universalization. It is also essential to use successful UBS

projects as springboards to mobilize resources, encourage replication and incorporate UBS approaches in sectoral programmes.

VI. PROPOSED POLICY: NEW ELEMENTS AND EMPHASES

38. The two interrelated guiding principles of the UNICEF revised urban policy, are: (a) the poor urban child should be a key concern in all sectoral programmes; and (b) a revitalized UBS strategy should be pursued, building on its successes and seizing new opportunities for expansion. Both principles should be derived from a country's NPA, with the sectoral programmes striving to reach all urban children, while the UBS strategy focuses specifically on the poor through innovative, viable approaches and supports links between community and provider.

A. Urban focus in sectoral programmes

39. UNICEF should support NPAs and sectoral plans to examine the country's urban problems and assess the impact of policies and programmes on urban children, with special reference to those in low-income areas. Mechanisms will be needed that take into account the special urban situations and opportunities and that adapt sectoral strategies accordingly. Urban social services are generally under the authority of the municipality, yet the private sector and NGOs are also key actors. Therefore, all three need to cooperate to ensure the success of both routine services and special campaigns. A municipal plan of action should be prepared with the collaboration of these various actors and community groups; the Mayor's Initiative offers a special opportunity to do so. The sectoral systems in each type of urban area, and perhaps each individual major city in a country, may need to be analysed before the NPA can be adapted to urban areas.

40. Patterns of disease, indicators of morbidity and mortality and data regarding occupation, shelter and environment should be assessed in order to establish priorities. The role of such providers as national Government, municipal government, health insurers, formal sector and workers' benefit schemes, private practitioners, informal providers and existing community-based health systems have to be taken into account. As urban health problems are closely tied to the environment, a multisectoral approach, coordinated at the municipal level, needs to be adopted. In view of the fact that natural increase contributes substantially to urban growth, UNICEF should support government and United Nations Population Fund programmes. The "baby-friendly" hospital initiative should be given community and institutional support to aid urban mothers, especially working mothers, by providing crèche and day-care services, paid post-natal leave and flexible working hours. To make primary education available to all, studies should be conducted to determine why children fail to enrol, why they drop out of school and why they repeat grades. The data should be disaggregated by location and by gender. If the formal system cannot be flexible enough to accommodate all children, then a non-formal system should be established (as was done, for example, by the Undugu Society in Kenya). Here again the private sector is a key player and needs to be part of the search for viable solutions. Low-cost water supply and sanitation techniques need to be more extensively used and supported. The environmental effects of water and

waste disposal need to be addressed. Social welfare services that generally cater to children in especially difficult circumstances are often in need of staff, funds and refresher training. Some may even need a reassessment of their mandate. Traditionally, the aim of these services has been to get children off the streets; they should now move to support and rehabilitate these children. The role of NGOs is crucial in this area due to their flexibility and commitment; the primary role of the Government may be to facilitate NGO efforts.

41. Addressing the inequities in the provision of urban social services will necessitate the following four types of action which target the poor: (a) restructuring sector resources in favour of low-cost technologies and approaches; (b) advocacy and support for institutional capacity-building, community participation/management and promotion of such innovative approaches as linkage with income-generating activities; (c) lifting subsidies to the better-off to facilitate subsidization of services to the poor and using innovative, soft recyclable loans to accelerate coverage of the unserved; and (d) promotion and support of intra- and interregional exchange of innovative ideas and approaches, as well as technical cooperation among developing countries. Sectoral programmes and their staff should be oriented to deal with communities and local government. Close interaction between these programmes and UBS and other community-based programmes should be encouraged; in addition, specific training and exchange of experience must be carried out. Sectoral components of UNICEF country programmes need to include a specific urban focus so as to support the thrust of the sectoral and subnational NPAs.

B. A revitalized urban basic services strategy

42. The revitalized UBS strategy will consist of four key thrusts within the framework of the NPA and the country programme approach: (a) promotion of the decade goals for children while joining other partners in poverty reduction, (especially to aid working mothers); (b) application of the Agenda 21 concept of PEC in low-income urban areas; (c) support to both rehabilitative and preventive approaches for children in especially difficult circumstances; and (d) advocacy, technical support and applied research for "urban development with a human face". In order to go to scale in the achievement of these goals, efforts will include the development of viable national urban policies; capacity-building for local-level management of sustainable urban development; and improved monitoring and impact analysis with attention to the costs of UBS to both service providers and to households.

Achievement of the decade goals for children and partnerships for poverty alleviation

43. A central feature of urban life is the dependence on a cash economy. The poor are doubly affected - by the need to pay cash for every service and by the opportunity costs of the time needed to utilize the service. Therefore the pursuit of the decade goals for children can have a dual benefit for the urban poor by improving their children's survival, development and protection, while at the same time reducing the economic burden and alleviating poverty. When tied to community participation and capacity-building, the benefits can be lasting and synergistic. UNICEF will work with other partners to attain the decade goals and to launch a broad-based attack on poverty.

44. Preventive health care that does not demand inordinate amounts of time or cash must be provided by combining essential services in an accessible location. It should be a community-based system that uses simply trained workers who are either part-time and voluntary or full-time and paid by some form of charge to the community. Links between these workers and the urban health system must be carefully worked out. Community-based child care in low-income areas needs to be promoted as part of the follow-up to the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative. The nutrition of the young child also calls for specific urban responses, for example, appropriate low-cost weaning foods. Careful use of mass media, Facts for Life and other social communication tools geared to urban life are needed.

45. There is need to develop appropriate alternative, non-formal education approaches if the formal system is not flexible enough to allow poor children to study when their work schedules permit. These approaches could use a condensed curriculum adapted to their particular situation, with a strong vocational component for teenagers. Subsidies or other measures to counteract such hidden costs as uniforms and texts are needed.

46. Other major decade goals, such as support to water supply and sanitation projects and help for children in especially difficult circumstances, are discussed below. In addition to these types of actions, support for credit and work opportunities, especially for working mothers, are necessary and are, in fact, feasible, as indicated by UBS and other experiences (for example, the Self-Employed Women's Association in India).

Primary environmental care

47. The PEC concept is fully in consonance with UBS. By addressing basic needs, PEC reinforces efforts to achieve the decade goals, adding a more explicit concern for environmental improvements and management. Its emphasis on community empowerment is also congruent with UBS principles. By applying the concept of PEC in low-income urban areas, at community and household levels, UNICEF will be helping to implement the objectives of both the World Summit for Children and UNCED.

48. Preventive health care in dense, low-income urban areas must involve environmental factors. Present knowledge and use of low-cost, locally managed technologies in the provision of safe water supply and disposal of solid and liquid waste need wider dissemination, with adaptation to local situations and resources, and in a socio-ecological context. A renewed emphasis on environmentally sustainable practices will lead to both health benefits and savings. For example, communities can hygienically recycle inorganic waste and compost organic garbage, using hand carts; this will provide employment, and the compost can be used in urban agriculture. While some types of urban air pollution can be tackled only by city-wide systems, alternative fuels, improved stoves and planting of trees on a small scale can be promoted, creating both health and economic benefits.

49. Other sectoral aspects of PEC have been mentioned above as part of the efforts to achieve the decade goals for children and to reduce poverty. One of the cross-sectoral issues is the strengthening of the capacity of municipal and national agencies to understand community concerns and dynamics and to respond adequately to them through an enabling, rather than merely a service delivery,

approach. There is scope for collaboration with other agencies on this issue, for instance, with the Urban Management Programme (a joint UNDP/World Bank/HABITAT venture). UNICEF also will need to strengthen its own analytical, planning and programming capabilities related to community empowerment and capacity-building. Staffing, recruitment and training for support to cross-sectoral and empowering approaches need support.

Children in especially difficult circumstances

50. Helping children in especially difficult circumstances is one of the major decade goals and a priority in terms of child protection in urban areas. It is also a means to attack the cycle of poverty and deprivation that often handicaps future generations. Among rehabilitative approaches, community- and street-based actions for support to street children and working children and other children at risk should be a priority in many urban areas. Where centres for counselling and remedial actions are needed, they should be open rather than closed institutions. Given the sensitivity and intense nature of this work, a combined effort by NGOs, the private sector (where many working children are employed) and communities, under the direction of the Government or local municipality, may be the answer. Alternative educational approaches discussed above will help both in preventive and rehabilitative thrusts, as will appropriate low-cost, community-based library, music, sports and cultural activities. UNICEF advocacy for vulnerable urban groups should take into account the serious new problems of emergencies and the resultant displacement of urban populations, the spread of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome and the escalation in the number of children in especially difficult circumstances due to drugs and violence.

"Urban development with a human face"

51. UNICEF vigorous and sustained advocacy of "adjustment with a human face" has been an important factor in modifying approaches to structural adjustment both by international agencies and Governments. This effort has evolved in the 1990s into advocacy and policy support for "development with a human face", which clearly must include urban development. The lessons learned from the impact of macroeconomic, political and social policies on the urban poor argue for an advocacy and technical support role for UNICEF in the development of viable national urban policies, along with other partners concerned with human development and poverty reduction.

52. Such a focus on the urban poor must be set in the context of a balanced urban and rural strategy, in the interests of comprehensive national development. There are several options in this strategy that might succeed in rejuvenating rural economies and managing urbanization, such as regional development, growth centre promotion, small- and medium-town development and urban/town planning; laws and regulations regarding zoning, land tenure in squatter areas and licensing of trade and market facilities; improved mechanisms for access to credit for the urban informal sector; and safety nets and compensatory mechanisms. The major programme thrusts in such a policy should include: support to the systematic review of urban and rural situations and disparities, with special reference to poor children and women; monitoring the impact of economic crises and of structural adjustment programmes on the poor; and targeting the urban and rural poor in all NPAs. This implies working within

the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and Agenda 21; applying lessons learned in community empowerment and capacity-building from UBS and other similar experiences; and adapting national sectoral programmes to ensure they reach the poor.

53. While some of the technical support for such a focus must come from other agencies, UNICEF will need to focus on the perspective of children and women. Such aspects as situation analyses, NPA formulation, implementation and monitoring, capacity-building at various levels and the implementation of programmes that demonstrate the feasibility of these perspectives will need UNICEF support. Also, known problems of female-headed households and the vulnerability of the girl child and women in general must be addressed specifically through advocacy, targeting and empowerment.

54. The imperative to universalize and mainstream UBS approaches to resolve the urgent problems of the urban poor implies that UNICEF will need to channel resources in areas where it has a comparative advantage. Mobilizing additional resources must be explored by forming alliances with other agencies where potential exists for fruitful collaboration; encouraging other agencies and Governments to increase their resources for urban programmes; supporting municipal restructuring of budgets and procedures to implement programmes for the urban poor; and, last but not least, enhancing community resources - financial, human and managerial.

Monitoring, evaluation and costing

55. Monitoring the decade goals requires the disaggregation of data not merely by rural and urban areas, but also by low-income and other urban areas (as in the water supply and sanitation sector). Such disaggregation can be sought in ongoing and planned surveys, censuses and baseline studies and will help in planning and monitoring, as well as in advocacy, for the poor urban child. Reporting on the World Summit follow-up and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should have specific references to the situation of the urban child and to intra-urban disparities, when possible. UBS experiences of viable community monitoring systems, as in Guatemala and the Philippines, need to be incorporated universally so that the process, as well as the results, can enhance community capacities and empowerment, improve actions for children and women and fulfil the needs of municipal, national and external agencies. Linkages must be established between community-based, project and national systems.

56. Recently, UNICEF has been engaged in developing appropriate techniques of costing various project inputs, and UBS will need to apply these to its community-based approaches. The costs to both service providers and to families will need to be examined over a period of time, especially in order to lower costs and to extend low-cost approaches in the medium and long term.

57. All actions on behalf of children cannot be taken at the same time. Priorities must be set, taking into account the level of urgency of the problems, the needs of the community, socio-cultural appropriateness, feasibility based on combined resources and capabilities and capacity to sustain benefits gained without external aid. Such determinations must be made at the

country, city or even community level, within the broad objectives of the overall programme.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

58. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the following recommendation:

The Executive Board,

Recognizing the magnitude and urgency of the problems of poor urban children and the positive experiences of the UBS strategy, while noting that its capabilities can be further enhanced so as to reach many more children,

Noting that UBS is a composite of programme delivery, empowerment, capacity-building, multisectoral linkages and sustainable technologies and approaches,

1. Endorses a two-pronged approach to problems of the urban poor consisting of an urban focus in various sectoral programmes and a revitalized UBS strategy, with four main thrusts: achievement of national decade goals for children along with a partnership for poverty reduction; action on PEC; attention to children in especially difficult circumstances; and application of the concept of "urban development with a human face";

2. Notes that these four thrusts are in the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Summit for Children and UNCED;

3. Urges all countries to address the needs of poor urban children through their NPAs, the follow-up to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Agenda 21, along the lines described above;

4. Urges UNICEF to support developing countries in their efforts to do so through country programmes, situation analyses and updates, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.

Notes

1/ United Nations Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects 1992 (New York, 1992), table A.1, p. 106, table A.5, pp. 154-159.

2/ Ibid., table A.11, pp. 187-194.

3/ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1990 (New York, 1992), pp. 85-86.

4/ United Nations, Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, A/CONF.151/26, vol. I), Agenda 21, para. 6.32.

5/ Human Development Report, op. cit., p. 86.

6/ World Health Organization, Spotlight on the Cities: Improving Urban Health in Developing Countries (Geneva, 1989), p. 64.

7/ World Health Organization, Urbanization and Its Implications for Child Health: Potential for Action (Geneva, 1988), p. 27.

8/ Bangladesh: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1991 Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh; Guatemala: unpublished data from UNICEF Guatemala office, 1990; Karachi: study by Agha Khan University students (unpublished), quoted in Trudy Harpham et al. (eds.), In the Shadow of the City: Community Health and the Urban Poor (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 20; Managua: unpublished data from UNICEF Guatemala office, 1990; Port-au-Prince: WHO, Urbanization and its Implications for Child Health (Geneva, 1988), p. 20; Porto Alegre: J. J. Guimares and A. Fischman, "Inequalities in 1980 Infant Mortality among Shanty Town Residents and Non-Shanty Town Residents in the Municipalities of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil", Bulletin of the Pan American Health Organization, 19 (3), 1985, pp. 235-251; national IMRs: UNICEF, State of the World's Children (New York, 1985-1991).

9/ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Monitoring Report 1990 (Baseline Year) (New York, November 1992), p. 12.

10/ Spotlight on the Cities, op. cit., p. 123.

11/ UNICEF, UNICEF Cooperation with Municipal Governments (New York, January 1992), p. 20; UNICEF, Reaching Summit Goals in Urban Areas: New Means and New Partnerships, Urban Examples, No. 18, 12 October 1992, p. 19.

12/ Bernt Aasen and A. Macrea, The Tegucigalpa Model: Water and Sanitation through Community Management, prepared for WATSAN Section, UNICEF (New York, 1990).

13/ UNICEF Cooperation with Municipal Governments, op. cit., pp. 19-23.

14/ Caroline Moser and P. Sollis, "Did the Project Fail? A Community Perspective on a Participatory Primary Health Care Project in Ecuador", Development in Practice: An Oxfam Journal (Oxford, Oxford UK), vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1991, p. 31.

15/ World Bank, World Development Report 1990 (Washington, D.C., 1990).

16/ World Bank, Urban Policy and Economic Development: An Agenda for the 1990s (Washington, D.C., 1991).

17/ United Nations Development Programme, Cities, People and Poverty: Urban Development Cooperation for the 1990s (New York, 1991).